

**JIM COFFROTH GIVES SOME "INSIDE DOPE"**

## SPORT PROMOTER COFFROTH BROUGHT OUT CHAMPIONS

"Sunny Jim" Tells of Interesting Experiences in Sporting World and Gives Some Inside Dope on His Varied Career—Once Gave Away Ball Club and Couldn't Buy It Back for \$250,000—Conducted Most of the Important Championship Fights and Is Now Managing Tia Juana Race Track.

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**R. Edgar's COLUMN**



I knew Jim Coffroth first when he was a secretary to the Judges in the Superior Courts of San Francisco—that was quite a little while ago. He was a smooth-faced, smiling, pleasant and keeping friends. Incidentally, he held some prominence as an amateur cyclist, swimmer and oarsman—a good all-around athlete. When he began "taking a fiver" as a promoter, he knew something about a lot of sports but had no experience in the business and financial end of the game. So he has had about as varied a run of luck as any one could wish for.

A few days ago Sunny Jim passed through New York on the way to visit some of the Southern racecourses before returning to San Diego. We found a quiet corner and talked over old times.

"It's a funny thing," said Jim, "that I'm promoting horse racing now, and I used to promote the biggest fights in the country, yet in all my life I never rode on a horse or put on a boxing glove. I never was a ball player, but one of my first ventures was an ownership of a baseball club. I was the San Francisco Beaneads in '93 and '94. That was my beginning as a promoter. It wasn't a very lucky one. That was a war year, you remember—Spanish War times, soldiers at the Presidio and Camp Merritt, and nobody took any interest in baseball. It busted me flat. What I was called upon for was an assessment of what I didn't have. I had reached the end of my string. I gave the Beaneads away to a friend of mine. You can 'em away, I just told him he could have them if he wanted them. And listen to this. In October, 1914, I offered to buy back the Beaneads for \$225,000. In cash and couldn't get them! I gave them away and didn't get them back for nothing. But times had changed. Baseball wasn't much of a sport on the Coast in the old days. It took a lot of boasting to get people interested. I remember when the Coast teams were playing through the season for a silver cup and giving all the receipts of the season to charity after each game. And they paid off. And then there was the All-American. And they paid off. And it was about a fight all the way."

"I was about twenty-three years old then. After the baseball I ran a six-day bike race, with Big Jim Kennedy of New York. We had some famous riders—Batch Walker, Teddy Hale and others. We were the best team in the country. Then I got mixed up in a courting park at Ingleside. That was a great sport in those days. BEGAN PROMOTING FIGHTS WITH 'BIG JIM' KENNEDY.

"But I got my real start in the money when I took up fight promoting. I suppose that's not what I was for the rest of my life. I'll tell you about Jim Coffroth, the fight promoter. I'm like Nat Goodman. Not like a bank and might be well known as a successful business man but nobody ever speaks of Nat Goodman with the bankers. He's always Nat Goodman, the actor."

"I had some interesting experiences managing the big fights. They all paid off for me—all the champions. I had Jeffries, Corbett, Fitzsimmons, Johnson, McCoy, Rukkin, Sharkey, Maher, Ryan, Choykay, Walcott, Greco, Hawkins, Gans, Nelson, Hartigan, Morrison, Young, Connelly, McLaughlin, Laveen and hundreds of others. I made big money in some fights and sometimes I lost a little, but I always paid my bills and my purses and ran everything on the level. That's the only way to run a sporting event, I say. And, of course, I learned that early in life."

"I don't claim to be any better than any other man. There was one time when I wanted to run a crooked fight and clean up, and I would have done it if I'd followed my own inclinations. It was after the show, though. We thought we'd try promoting fights. We ran a few with indifferent success."

**WAS TEMPTED TO "KILLING" IN FIXED FIGHT.**

"At that time I had my job as attorney to the Judges in the Supreme Courts and I stuck to it for years even when I was busy promoting. My salary was \$10 a month and my living expenses ran away over that. I needed some more badly, and I saw a chance to make a clean-up. The moral side of the matter never struck me at all. I didn't even think of it. We had Kid Carter and Joe Walcott matched. I figured that it would be a big betting fight, and that if I had it framed for Carter to win, Walcott could easily make a killing. The world must have been pretty bad for me for a long time to come. As excited, I went to Jim and put the proposition to him."

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